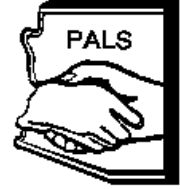




# INFORMATION SHEET

## Parent Information Network Clearinghouse

Arizona Department of Education  
Exceptional Student Services



### Specific Learning Disability

#### What is a Specific Learning Disability?

According to Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §15-761(33): "Specific learning disability":

(a) Means a specific learning disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations.

(b) Includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and aphasia.

(c) Does not include learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, motor or emotional disabilities, of mental retardation, or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage."

#### How Common is a Specific Learning Disability?

In the 2002-03 school year, 53,510 Arizona students were classified as having a specific learning disability and received special education services. This number represents 5.87 percent of the 912,083 children enrolled in Arizona public schools as of October 1, 2002.

#### What Effect Does a Specific Learning Disability Have on a Child?

Each person with a specific learning disability is unique. Each has a different combination or cluster of characteristics which can range from mild to severe. Once a comprehensive evaluation has provided a diagnosis of a specific learning disability, effective intervention strategies should include a total approach to meeting the educational, psychological, medical, and social needs of the individual.

In addition to strategies and modifications, the use of Assistive Technology (AT) devices, both low-technology and high-technology, may lessen some of the barriers to learning. Consideration should be given to the need for AT during the comprehensive evaluation.

According to Smith and Strick (1999), some characteristics which are directly related to the definition of learning disabilities are:

- *Difficulty with conversation and word retrieval*
- *Problems associating letters with sounds*
- *Difficulty analyzing sound sequences*
- *Poor comprehension for what is read*
- *Limited vocabulary*
- *Difficulty with verbal reasoning*
- *Misunderstands what is heard on radio or TV*
- *Difficulty making comparisons & classifications*
- *Bizarre spelling errors*
- *Problems with number retrieval*
- *Inability to associate math sign with its function*
- *Trouble memorizing math facts*
- *Short attention span*
- *Lack of impulse control*
- *Difficulty following directions*
- *Absent mindedness*
- *Poor planning and organizational skills*
- *Inflexibility*
- *Social immaturity*
- *Clumsy, appears awkward & uncoordinated*

Many students with specific learning disabilities can, and often do, go on to vocational education classes, programs, or colleges where special help is available. According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990, universities and colleges that accept federal funds must provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Modifications for college entrance tests can be arranged through a student's high school. Allowable adaptations can include: extended time, a four-function calculator, a reader or a person to record answers, or an audio cassette edition with regular-type copy. Adaptations will depend on the student's disability and must be requested well in advance of the test date.

## Video Cassettes

## References

Smith, C. & Strick, L. (1999). *Learning disabilities: A to Z: A parent's complete guide to learning disabilities from preschool to adulthood*. NY: Free Press.

### Books for Adults

Kranowitz, C. S. (1998). *The out-of-sync child: Recognizing and coping with sensory integration dysfunction*. NY: Perigree.

Osman, B. B. (1997). *Learning disabilities and ADHD: A family guide to living and learning together*. NY: Warner Books.

Silver, L. B., M.D. (1998). *The misunderstood child: Understanding and coping with your child's learning disabilities*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). NY: Times Books.

Taymans, J. M., West, L. L. & Sullivan, M. (ed.) (2000). *Unlocking potential: College and other choices for people with LD and AD/HD*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

Tanquay, P. (2001). *Nonverbal learning disabilities at home: A parent's guide*. NY: Taylor and Francis.

### Books for Children

Fisher, G. & Cummings, R. (2002). *The survival guide for kids with LD (learning differences)*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing.

Gehret, J. (1996). *Eagle eyes: A child's guide to paying attention*. Fairport, NY: Verbal Images Press.

Janover, C. (2000). *How many days until tomorrow?* Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

Roberts, K. (1998). *Bright and behind: A book for children and parents to cope with reading and attention problems*. NY: Edgeworth Communications.

Senisi, E. B. (1998). *Just kids: Visiting a class for children with special needs*. NY: Dutton Children's Books.

Lavoie, R. *How difficult can this be? A learning disabilities workshop. (aka F. A. T. City)*. Alexandria, VA: PBS Videos.

Lavoie, R. *Learning disabilities & social skills: Last one picked, first one picked on*. Alexandria, VA: PBS Videos.

Lavoie, R. *Learning disabilities and discipline: When the chips are down*. Alexandria, VA: PBS Videos.

Moss, P. B. & Silver, L. B., M.D. *Picture of success*. Pittsburgh, PA: Learning Disabilities Association of America

### Organizations/Hotlines/Web Sites

Council for Exceptional Children, Division of Learning Disabilities, 1110 N. Glebe Rd., Ste. 300, Arlington, VA 22201-5704, 703-620-3660 or Toll Free, 888-232-7733, [www.ccc.sped.org](http://www.ccc.sped.org)

Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital, 1919 E. Thomas Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85016, 602-546-1400 [www.phoenixchildrens.com/illnesses](http://www.phoenixchildrens.com/illnesses)

Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks (EAPN) [www.ade.az.gov/ess/eapn](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/eapn)

International Dyslexia Association, Arizona Chapter, P. O. Box 6284, Scottsdale, AZ 85261-6284, 480-941-0308, [www.dyslexia-az.org](http://www.dyslexia-az.org)

Learning Disabilities Association, of America, 4156 Library Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15234-1349, 888-300-6710 or 412-341-1515, [www.LDAAmerica.org](http://www.LDAAmerica.org)  
Arizona Chapter, 13106 W. Limewood Dr., Sun City West, AZ 85375, 623-975-4551

NICHCY (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities), P. O. Box 1492, Washington, DC, 20013-1492, 800-695-0285, [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

National Center for Learning Disabilities, 381 Park Avenue S., Ste. 1401, New York, NY 10016-8806, 888-575-7373 or 212-545-7510, [www.nclld.org](http://www.nclld.org)

Parent Information Network Clearinghouse, Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, 1535 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-364-4015 or 800-352-4558, [www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals)

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, 3627 E. Indian School Rd., Ste. 108, Phoenix, AZ 85018, 480-443-4580, [www.rfbd.org](http://www.rfbd.org)